

How to Be Ready

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[0 : 00] The scripture for today comes from Matthew chapter 25. Starting in verse 1, we read, Then the kingdom of heaven will be like ten virgins, who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. For when the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with them. But the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. As the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept.

But at midnight there was a cry. Here is the bridegroom, come out to meet him. Then all those virgins rose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.

But the wise answered, saying, Since there will not be enough for us and for you, go rather to the dealers and buy for yourselves. And while they were going to buy, the bridegroom came.

And those who were ready went in with him to the marriage feast, and the door was shut.

Afterward, the other virgins came also, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

[1 : 06] But he answered, Truly I say to you, I do not know you. Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour. For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property.

To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them.

And he made five talents more. So also, he who had two talents made two talents more. But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

Now after a long time, the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, Master, you delivered to me five talents.

Here, I have five talents more. His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much.

[2 : 14] Enter into the joy of your master. And he who had two talents came forward, saying, Master, you delivered me two talents. Here, I have two talents more.

His master said to him, Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.

He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, Master, I know you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow and gather where you scattered no seed.

So I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours. But his master answered him, You wicked and slothful servant.

You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scatter no seed. Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers. And at my coming, I should have received what was my own with interest.

[3 : 15] So take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has will more be given. And he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place, there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

Before him will be gathered all the nations. And he will separate people from one another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

Then the kingdom will say to those on his right, Come, you are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you gave me food.

I was thirsty, and you gave me drink. I was a stranger, and you welcomed me. I was naked, and you clothed me. I was sick, and you visited me. I was in prison, and you came to me.

[4 : 23] Then the righteous will answer him, saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and gave you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you?

And when did we see you sick, or in prison and visit you? And the king will answer them, Truly I say to you, As you did it to one of the least of these, my brothers, You did it to me.

Then he will say to those on his left, Depart from me, you cursed into the eternal fire, Prepared for the devil and his angels. Where I was hungry, and you gave me no food.

I was thirsty, and you gave me no drink. I was a stranger, and you did not welcome me. Naked, and you did not cloth me. Sick and in prison, and you did not visit me. Then they also will answer, saying, Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister to you?

Then he will answer them, saying, Truly I say to you, As you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me. And these will go away into internal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.

[5 : 45] This is the word of God. Great. Thanks so much, Annabelle, Risa. That was great reading. Good to have the alternation.

And yeah, we are racing through the book of Matthew, chapter 25. And today, why don't we pray together, as we listen to God's word.

Father, thank you for these words. Thank you that we have the words of Jesus. We pray that we would listen to our King, our Savior, our Master. Please speak to each one of us. Would we hear what you want us to hear?

Whatever that may be. Thank you that you are the living and speaking God. So encourage us today, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, it's great not to have masks. Although, looking back, if there was one restriction that you have to keep, which one would it be?

I don't know. And actually, the one that I'm most grateful for is quarantine gone, right? Life is so different now. I don't know how many of you have been flying. So many people, they're now on business trips and on holiday.

[6 : 51] And so, of course, you're flying and you get the safety features, right? The sewer that's showing where's the exits and here's the live vest. How many of you listen to that?

I think no one, right? Well, the reason is very simple. We don't think it will happen, right? And there's no way we're going to crash. So why would I listen? What if you really knew the plane would crash? I think you would listen, right? Everyone would get a mobile phone and video it and kind of save it for later. Now, if you really know something's going to happen, you would be ready. We just don't think it will be.

And I think that's why we want to listen to what Jesus has been saying, right? Something big is going to happen. We heard that last week. If you were here, Jesus is going to return.

It's going to be the end of the world, the end of history. Big change, right? The new creation, the final judgment, as we heard.

[7 : 52] And Jesus says, we need to be ready. And if you were there last week, yeah, that was challenging. We want to be ready. We want to hear, right? The disciples, they were interested. Okay, hey, Jesus, when are you going to come back?

And what will be the sign? And Jesus starts saying, okay, you need to be ready. And today is basically part two of that speech. And so I hope we want to listen, especially because I think it's, I've been challenged that it's not quite what I expected.

But right, Jesus wants us to be ready for his return. I mean, if you read the whole New Testament, I think one out of every 10 verses is about Jesus' return. It's just a big topic. Let's listen to what Jesus has to say.

And we have these three parables. Obviously, the last one isn't a parable. Three stories. And they help us, well, how to be ready. So first, yeah, the virgins.

Now, what is the story here, right, with the virgins? Well, then the kingdom, verse one, of heaven will be like 10 virgins who took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.

[8 : 56] I don't know. It's, I guess these virgins are like bridesmaids. What happened back then? Yeah, that was the big feast, but the bridegroom, I think he would go and get his bride and then come back and there would be this big procession into the feast and these bridesmaids would have lamps to kind of light the way.

And so they, they, they, they were kind of waiting for the bridegroom to come so that they could kind of, you know, then have their lamps and go in with him to the feast and be part of the procession. I like bridesmaids. That's what you should think. The only thing is, well, of course, they were wise and foolish and some of them brought this extra oil. But they, they trimmed their lamps, right, they were waiting but the, verse five, as the bridegroom was delayed, they all became drowsy and slept, right?

They put their lamps on the lowest setting, just waiting outside for the bridegroom. And then suddenly, well, here at midnight is the bridegroom, right? Here is the big moment.

And so they, they all get up and they, they put their lamps to the highest setting, right? Now, here's the procession. We're going to go in. And the only thing is, well, you need extra oil then, all right?

[10 : 04] Because the lamps have been burning all night. And so the wise ones, they have oil. But the foolish ones, we don't have oil. And, well, what do we do? Well, go and buy some. So five of the bridesmaids, they go off to buy oil.

And while they're away, the bridegroom comes. The wise ones go in with him and the door is shut. That's kind of the story here, right? I guess we can follow it.

Here's the bridesmaids. And some of them, well, we think it's about being ready, right? Although he actually, when you read the story, it was very surprising, right?

I mean, you expect this, this comes after what Jesus has been saying about his return. And of course, he is the bridegroom, right? He is the bridegroom who comes back after a long delay and we want to be ready, right?

But, you know, he talked last week, hey, I'm coming like a thief in the night. I'm going to come suddenly. So you'd expect be awake. And isn't that what this parable is about?

[11 : 07] Well, here are the 10 virgins and, you know, five of them stayed awake and five of them were asleep. Well, that's not the story. How many of them were awake?

None of them. They all fell asleep. What made the difference? How do you say it? Right? They had oil. You had added oil.

That's the thing, right? Five of them were prepared and five of them were not prepared. It's not about how, were they ready? It's not about what were they doing when the bridegroom came.

It is, were they prepared? And when do you prepare? Well, you do that beforehand. You do that now, right? The difference between the wise and the foolish, actually, there was a long time before the bridegroom came that they were ready.

And actually, that is really surprising to me, right? It's not what you expect. We always talk about, okay, Jesus is going to come back. You need to be ready then. This story actually says, well, you need to be ready now.

[12 : 11] You need to be prepared now. And actually, it's exactly the same with the other two stories, isn't it? Because here's the master and he, and the servants, and then he calls them to account.

Does it talk about what the, what the servants were doing when the master came? No. I mean, that was last week. There was a parable about that, yeah. But here, it is about what have they been doing while he was away?

And likewise, yeah, the final judgment, it's not what people were doing when the son of man came. It's what were they doing while he was away? And so that is, I think, the biggest surprise here, right?

It is prepare for Jesus' return. Being ready is about now. And I think that, yeah, it's, yes, there is an element what we looked at last week, right?

Make sure you're not kind of away from Jesus. You're not, you know, completely away from Jesus when he comes because that'll be a shock. But actually, getting ready is part, it's a lot of it is about now.

[13:15] What do we do now? How we live now, at work, at church, in our family, now? That is how Jesus says we're going to be ready. It's about what we're doing while he is away. And I think that's really, in a way, encouraging, right?

I don't know, some places in Asia, especially like Korea, they have this, at the end of high school, there's this really big exam, right? Everything hangs on this one exam at the end of high school. Which university do you go to? Which career can you have? It's all about this one exam. And your whole time in school, it doesn't matter, right? It doesn't really matter what tests you did or exams, it doesn't matter.

It's just about this one final exam. And in a way that, you know, your life is not very important, it's just about this one exam. What if, the day before the exam, your boyfriend breaks up with you and you're completely distraught and, you know, this one exam goes wrong.

So much pressure on this one thing. Well, it's wonderful to hear it's not like that with Jesus. It's not about, okay, there's this one unknown day in the future and that's when you need to be ready.

[14:22] That is the only thing that matters. And that puts so much pressure and that's why Christians want to know, when is it going to happen? Because so much pressure on this one day. Actually, Jesus says, no, it's about preparing.

It's about being ready now. And it's encouraging, right? Your life now matters. Your family now matters. Your work now matters. Church now matters.

Right? That is what Jesus wants. Actually, we want to prepare for Jesus' return. We want to be ready. Well, we do that now. And that's where we're going to go. Of course, then, okay, what does it look like to prepare?

What does it look like to be ready? We'll look at the foolish virgins later. Well, second story, well, it's about this story about the talents. In a way, the story is quite straightforward, right?

There's a master. Verse 14, it will be like a man going on a journey who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one, he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability.

[15:26] And then he went away. And he, this man goes away on a long journey and he gives his property, his money to his servants. And they are supposed to go and invest it.

And that's what they do, right? Two of them, they go and put their money to work. They trade, they make five more, they make two more, but one hides in the ground.

And then again, after a long time, he came back and then he calls his servants to account. What have you been doing while I was away? And the point is pretty simple, right?

In a way, use your talents. That's what it says. The only thing is, you know, yeah, use your talents. Don't bury them. But what are these talents, right? Now, I guess most of us, we hear talents and you think like, Britain's got talents, right?

And you, you, we use in English the word talent for kind of artistic skills, right? Like piano and violin and ballet. That is, you know, and you hear this parable and, you know, if you can play the piano, you need to use it.

[16:31] You know, go for the grade eight exam and, and those kind of things, right? This is the, the Tiger Mom parable, right? Make it, use your talents. But of course, that's modern English.

This was Greek 2000 years ago. What does the word talent mean? It doesn't mean skill. A talent is a unit of weight. It's about 30 kilos and usually 30 kilos of, of silver.

So it's basically a money unit. So he's just giving money. That's the story, right? It is the servant, the master gives his money to the servants, go and invest it, go trade with it.

It's money. All right? So what is it? Well, we don't really know. He doesn't say. I mean, he says, uh, when we all know, we just know it's different, right?

One has five, one has two, one has one. So in Luke, there is the story of the 10 minas. That's where each servant gets exactly the same. I think that that's the gospel, right?

[17:31] We all have the same gospel and we're supposed to use it. This is, I think, something that's different between us. So, you know, it doesn't say what it is. I think it's just, you know, use what you have, you know, use what you have.

Maybe you, uh, use your money for Jesus. Use your time for Jesus. Use your gifts. Yeah, of course, if you can use your piano for Jesus, do it. Great music team.

But, you know, uh, use your opportunities for Jesus, right? Use what you have for Jesus. I think that's what it says, right? The master wants the servants to use his property for him.

use, yeah, use it. Use what you have. And then what do we learn from this parable? I mean, one thing that I hope strikes you is that the master is really generous.

I mean, 30 kilos of silver, that's a lot, right? your ESV footnote tells you is a monetary unit worth about 20 years wages for a laborer.

[18 : 32] Okay? So, one of those things is worth two and a half million Hong Kong dollars. So, this master, he gives 12 million to this guy and five million to this guy and two and a half million to this guy.

Go and invest it. If you work in finance, I don't know how much you get to invest from people, but it's a lot of money, right? But then when he comes back and, you know, here's the servant and, hey, your five talents have made five more.

What does he say? Well, such a great response, right? Well done. Good and faithful servant, verse 21. You have been faithful over a little, just 12 million, a little.

I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master, right? I'm going to give you a much greater responsibility and enter into the joy of your master.

Come celebrate with me. Come to my party and be with me, right? A great reward. He's so generous and he's so fair, right?

[19 : 36] Because here's one guy and he's made five talents. Well, there's the other guy with the two talents and he's made two more. And what does he get? Well, that's okay.

No, no, no, right? Verse 23. His master said to him, well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little. I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.

Exactly the same response, word for word, right? It's so fair. It doesn't matter. One had five talents, the other had two talents. Exactly the same response. It's so nice, right? I mean, use what you have.

Some people just have more than others, right? There are some people who are amazingly gifted and others are not and you just think, well, they, Jesus is so pleased with them and Kevin is so amazing and, you know, and I'm, you know, that's how many of us feel.

No, it's use what you have. Maybe you don't have very much. Maybe you have a young baby and the only thing you can do is change nappies and you don't have much time for anything else. Jesus knows that and he is not expecting you to do, right, a lot.

[20 : 43] He knows. Maybe you have a medical condition and you can't do very much. No, Jesus knows what you have. He's given it to you. Just use what you have, right? In a way, that's encouraging.

Here's a master who is generous and fair, right? And maybe the person who gets the most reward is someone you don't expect. A bit like that widow who put in the two copper coins compared to all the rich people because she put in everything and they put on just a little bit, right?

And that's so encouraging. Use what you have and what an awesome privilege, right? I mean, I don't know what your boss is like. So many bosses in Hong Kong are terrible. He is the most wonderful master.

Not Kevin, by the way, but but yeah, use what you have, so use it and we'll come back to the first servant later.

But of course, use what you have, well, for what? And that is the third story. It's not even a parable, right? The final judgment because he doesn't say then it will be like, it's not, this is what it's like, this is actually what it is.

[21 : 50] This is the future. This is Jesus' return. And verse 31, when the Son of Man comes in his glory and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne.

Before him will be gathered all the nations and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Imagine the scene, the Son of Man, Jesus, in glory, on a throne, all the angels with him.

There's not a single angel out there suing something else because, you know, this is the end of the world. The universe has stopped. There's nothing to do. There's only one thing happening right now which is, well, the final judgment.

Here is Jesus. He gathers all the nations, all the billions of people from across the world, from across history, before him. But it's not about nations.

It's about individuals, right? He separates people. You go there. You go there. No protests. No rebellions. No complaints. This is it.

[22 : 59] This is Jesus coming back. I mean, I think I made too many jokes, right? In a way, this is really solemn. It's an awesome scene, but this is what will happen.

This is the future for all of us. I know you want to get that right, right? But then, it does seem a bit unusual how Jesus judges here, right?

Because you read it and it sounds like you need to be kind to the poor. Because verse 34, then the king will say to those on his right, come, you who are blessed by my father, inherit the kingdom, prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me. I was naked and you clothed me. I was sick and you visited me. I was in prison and you came to me.

Right? But we didn't see you. Well, when you did, what you did for the least of these? It's what you did for me. It sounds like, yeah, helping the poor, which of course we know is a good thing, but you'd expect Jesus to say, okay, you guys, you cling to the cross and you don't.

[24 : 07] So, that's the big difference, right? You believe in me and you don't. Well, that's why we need to think carefully about this. Well, what does he mean? Well, first of all, and it sounds almost like they're earning it, right?

Hey, you've done good, you've helped the poor and you haven't done good. Well, first of all, verse 34, notice what he says. Come, you who are blessed by my father.

Come and inherit the kingdom. I mean, they are words of grace, right? You are blessed. You inherit. Inheriting, you don't do anything for that. You just receive.

And of course, you know, what is Jesus going to do after his speech? He's going to go to the cross. Why would he go to the cross if we can earn it by helping the poor?

But also, actually even more, look at the surprise of the righteous. They're kind of surprised, right? I mean, if I was thinking I was going to earn salvation and Jesus says, yes, you're in, I would go, yes, I've done enough, right?

[25 : 12] No one says that. They're just surprised. Oh, we didn't know we were helping you. They were not doing anything to get in or something. It was just what they were, they were just normally living like this.

And they were surprised that Jesus actually, you know, saw that and cared so much about it. That's the thing, right? And it's not like the ones who didn't that they, well, they tried, but they didn't do it enough.

There's no standard. It's very binary. There's people who do, people who don't. It's really one or the other. And also, it's not just generally the poor, right? Because it's, well, verse 40, look at what Jesus says.

And whatever you did for the least of these, my brothers. Yeah, he says, this is these, my brothers. This is about poor Christians. Doesn't mean we don't need to care about all the poor, but the focus is here on Christians.

And actually, to make that, so in a way, it's, you know, it's serving God's people. That's what he wants, serve God's people. And to understand it, I think you, you know, we think of being a Christian in modern Hong Kong, where being a Christian is easy.

[26 : 22] Actually, in most places in the world, being a Christian, you know, you're in a small, marginalized, little community. You know, you're in a Muslim country or something, and the majority is Muslim, and they have all the power, and the Christians are just this, this tiny group, right?

And then they're marginalized, and they're oppressed. That is what it's like in most places to be a Christian. To be a Christian is to be, in many countries, poor and hungry and in prison.

And you have just two communities. You have the, you know, the world, and they reject the Christian community, and you have the Christians, and they care for each other. So in a way, what this boils down to is just what Jesus is saying, which side are you on?

Are you on Jesus' side? Then you're part of the church, and I guess you embrace the church. Or if, are you not part of, not on Jesus' side, in which case you probably will reject the church and, you know, oppress them.

That is basically what lies behind it. It's so different from here, because here, you know, you become a Christian, the only thing that changes, well, Sunday morning, I can't go and lie in bed, I go to church, right?

[27 : 32] That's almost, there's so little cost to being a Christian. In many places in the world, there's a huge cost, and I think that's what lies behind it. So, yeah, which side do you belong to?

Because your attitude to Christ is seen in your attitude to the church. And Jesus said, how do you know, how can people see that you belong to me? Well, if you love one another, if you are part of the church, if you care for each other, that is almost, that's the evidence of being a Christian, because, you know, as Christians, we need it.

If life is hard, as it is, we need each other. So, you put these parables together, I hope you can see what they say, right? These three things together, prepare for Jesus' return by using what you have to serve God's people.

That is what these three things, I think, together say. This is what, yeah, how Jesus wants us to live. You want to be ready, right? What should we be doing now? How should we be living our life? What should we do with our time and money? Well, I want you to serve each other, to love one another, to take care. So, not just showing up on Sunday.

[28 : 41] I mean, it's great to be here. I hope you get a kick out of being here that will last you the whole week. But other people, they go to the football field and they get a kick out of that last Sunday week.

You know, we're here for each other. We're here for community, right? And not just hanging out with your CG, but, you know, actually loving and supporting each other.

And what if it's really harder to be a Christian? You know, CG is great. What if your CG member is fired from their job because they're a Christian and then they can't pay their rent and they need to move in with you for three months?

Would you like that? I guess then it's suddenly, okay, do I really love my CG members or not, right? That is what he's asking. All right? Even now, people may not get fired, but people here are going through a tough time.

Let's take time to sit with them, right? Listen patiently to them because they're your brothers and sisters and Jesus loves them and he wants, and so if he loves them, we want to love them.

[29 : 46] And using what you have, I mean, for some of it it's money. I think the challenge in Hong Kong is often time, right? Are we willing to give our time to people? Give our homes. That's, yeah.

Or how about Christians going through hard times elsewhere? Because the thing is that the social media and stuff, right, we know what the world is like and we know that there's plenty of Christians in Southeast Asia or in India and life is very difficult for them and, you know, some of those Christians are, you know, they have to survive on hardly anything and we have so much money compared to them.

Wouldn't it be wonderful if we can support the church in places like Bangladesh or something?

There's organizations doing that, like Stand Asia or here in Hong Kong or other ones.

It's wonderful if we can be a worldwide church, right, where we love our brothers and sisters. And they're not just people out there. They're our brothers and sister and Jesus died for them, Jesus loves them, he's made us part of the same family.

You know, can we try and love them? That's one thing that Jesus would love us to do. Right? If we are Christ, we will love his little ones. That is what genuine faith looks like.

[31 : 02] Because it does matter, right? I've been focusing on the positive, but in these stories and these parables, that there is, there are people who just do not live like this and it doesn't end well for them.

There is a strong theme of judgment, right? I mean, five foolish virgins shut out from the wedding feast. They knock on the door and the guy says, I do not know you.

Chilling words. Although we need to remember, you know, wise and foolish, I mean, there are moral words in the Bible.

I mean, it's not that one was smart and the other was a bit forgetful. You know, the kind of people they're always prepared and they always have spare masks and, you know, an umbrella and sunglasses and all that stuff with them and there's people who are just forgetful.

Oh, I forgot my keys. These are not the forgetful versions. These are, well, foolish versions. Right? I mean, if you want to be a bridesmaid, if you want to have a lamp, you need oil to just not bring oil in a way you don't care much about the groom, right?

[32 : 15] You don't care much about the wedding if you don't bring oil. In a modern day, if you're a bridesmaid and you forget to put on your bridesmaid's dress, I don't think the bride would think well

of you, right?

I mean, this is a more serious, ultimately, they just don't care about the groom and bride, right? And if he says, I do not know you, I mean, knowing is relational, actually, this is quite a relational breach here, right?

If you treat me like this. Or look at that servant, the servant with one talent. I mean, that was two and a half million dollars that he got to invest. And what does he do?

He buries it in the ground and, I don't know, go and watch Netflix or whatever. Again, it's not that the servant really tried his best, and I'm sorry, I only made half a talent more.

I tried, but you know, the economy isn't good. It's nothing like that, right? He just buries it in the ground and does nothing. And no wonder Jesus says, wicked and slothful servant.

[33 : 21] Well, again, this is a servant, right? The virgin was waiting for the groom, and this servant belongs to the master, except that, well, he did not do what Jesus asked.

He didn't do his job. He just took the time and the money and the gifts and everything Jesus gave and didn't do anything with it. Well, Jesus, yeah, I mean, what does he care about his master?

His wonderful, generous master, and he says, oh, I thought you were so harsh. You don't know me, right? Ultimately. Or, yeah, the goats, of course, that's the most severe.

Verse 41, you know, depart from me, you cursed into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. You know, the fire wasn't for them. It was for the devil, but if you choose his side, yeah, that's where you end up.

And that's a scary word, right? The eternal fire, or verse 46, these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life. But again, which side were they on, right?

[34 : 31] I mean, ultimately, again, we shouldn't see this as a standard. These are not people, you know, all of them, and they really tried their best. They just weren't good enough. That's not how this thinks, right? It's very binary.

And ultimately, yeah, it's coming down, do you know Jesus, right? The virgins, they rejected the groom because they didn't prepare for their wedding, and the servant rejected the master because he just didn't do anything with the talent.

And the other people, well, they rejected Jesus' community that Jesus loved so much. They didn't know the master. They didn't know how he identified with these little ones, right? He's not a king on a throne.

But he, you know, he loves these little ones. And if you give a cup of water to one of these little ones, he's so pleased and you're blessed. If you reject one of these little ones, yeah, he cares about it.

If you reject them, you reject him. I know these are scary verses. I mean, if you're not a Christian, I hope you take these words seriously. I mean, it's more about, you know, challenging Christians than you, but it is true, right?

[35 : 39] There is an authority figure here. There's a groom, there's a master, there's a king, the son of man. And it's his world, it's his party. And, yeah, if you don't know him and you don't belong to him, then you won't be at the party.

that makes you want to come back. He is good, he's generous, he's kind, I hope you see that through it. He will love to have you back, he would love to forgive you, he would love to welcome you at the wedding, at the party, to enter into his joy together.

So do do that. I hope for us Christians, if we see Jesus here, I hope we want to be ready, right? And not out of fear, but because we want to be with him at the wedding.

It's a privilege to be his bridesmaid. It's a privilege to be his servant and be entrusted with millions and using that for him, using that to love his people of which we are one.

I hope it's just a natural response to this, right? Again, this is not a standard we need to reach. It's just a natural response if you know Jesus. And if you're not sure, if you wonder if this is you, please just take another look at Jesus, right?

[36 : 59] Again, if we're not living like this, if you wonder, am I really doing anything with my life for Jesus? Am I really, you know, come back to him, come back to the son of man.

You know, see his generosity, see his kindness, and see the gospel as, you know, chapter 26, right? The same son of man.

I just think it's so, you know, you wonder what it means, the son of man. But here in chapter 25, right? The son of man on his glorious throne. But we go to chapter 26.

when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said to his disciples, you know that after two days the Passover is coming and the son of man will be delivered up to be crucified. And the son of man who will judge all the nations, he went to the cross for you.

And the same son of man who will give eternal punishment, he went and took eternal punishment to save you. If that doesn't show love and generosity and kindness and melt our hearts, then we just haven't understood him.

[38 : 08] So come back to your king and savior, right? And know him and then we want to be ready, we want to be at the feast, we want to prepare to meet him, we want to use what we have to serve him.

So let that change our life. Why don't we pray together? Lord Jesus, we are in awe of your majesty and glory, your authority, but also your love and grace and kindness.

If we, yeah, we want to see you more as who you are. Thank you that you tell us about yourself and we can know you. Would we respond naturally?

Would we respond with love? Would we respond with faith? Would we respond with service, with being ready to meet you because we see your grace? We pray for each one of us here.

Those of us who don't know you yet, would we see you and come to you? Those of us who maybe have been going to church, but we've never really thought about what it means to know you and never really thought what it means for our lives.

[39 : 26] Yeah, would we maybe take that step? Not out of fear, not out of standards that we need to meet, but as a response to who you are and would it change our life.

Lord, help us to talk about these things, help us to love each other, help us to encourage each other, help us to serve each other as you want us to do here, that as a church we would keep going, as a church we would serve and love and all be ready on that day.

In Jesus' name, Amen.